

Fingertip bruising



Bruising Behind the Ear



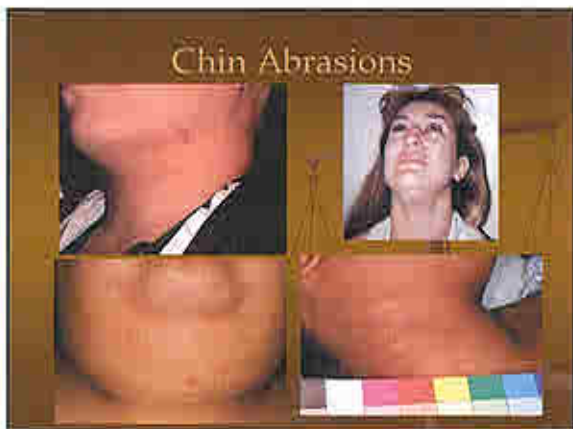
Ligature Marks

There is no mark is perpendicular to the neck









Chin Contusion



Subconjunctival Hemorrhage

- Capillary rupture in the sclera of the eyes
- This suggests a particularly vigorous struggle

Subconjunctival Hemorrhage



Petechiae (Tiny Red Spots)

- A result of the rupturing of the capillaries
- Might appear above the area of trauma
- Areas to check:
 - Eyes and eyelids
 - Face
 - Behind the ears, Inside the ears (usually only visible with a magnified scope)
 - Hairline

Petechiae



Petechiae



Petechiae on the Eyelid



Petechiae on the Neck



Palate Petechiae



Petechiae on the Face



Petechiae on the Hairline



Swelling (Edema)

■ Neck or tongue

- Usually caused by internal bleeding, injury to any of the underlying neck structures, or fracture of the larynx allowing air to escape into the tissues of the neck

Swelling



Handprints on the Neck





Questions to ask your Victim

Questions to Ask

- Routinely ask every abused victim, "Did your husband/boyfriend strangle you?"
 - Did he put his hands around your neck?
- How did he do it?
 - Hands (one or two)?
 - Object? What object?
- Have them demonstrate it
 - Use an imaginary person
 - Video tape or photograph demonstration

- Do **not** have them demonstrate on themselves or have someone demonstrate on the victim



Better way to demonstrate



Questions to Ask

- How long did the suspect strangle you?
- How hard did the suspect grab the victim's throat?
- Was the victim simultaneously shaken while being strangled?
 - How much shaking?
- Could the victim breathe or have difficulty breathing?

Questions to Ask

- Did the victim involuntarily urinate or defecate?
- Did the victim faint, black out or lose consciousness?
- Did the victim complain of nausea or report vomiting?
- Any complaints of pain, discomfort, or trouble swallowing? Raspy voice?

Questions to Ask

- Any prior incidents of strangulation? How Many? How often?
- Any pre-existing neck injuries?
- Was the suspect wearing any rings?
- What did the suspect say to the victim while he was strangling her?
- Have victim describe the suspect's facial demeanor and facial expressions

Investigative Points to Remember

- Have you described the visible injuries in detail and photographed them?
- Have you taken follow-up photographs (1-3 days after the incident)?
- If an object was used to strangle the victim, was it photographed and impounded as evidence?

Liability

- Even with no visible injury, have EMS respond.
 - Potential internal injury that can be fatal, might not be apparent.
- Because of underlying brain damage caused by a lack of oxygen during strangulation, victim's have died up to a week later.

Recap and New Goal

- 50% of cases, No visible injury
- 35% of cases, Minor visible injury, too minor to photograph
- 15% of cases, significant visible injury
- **Goal:** By knowing all the signs and symptoms to look for and document in strangulation cases, we can identify previously overlooked injuries



N.U.R.S.E. *Scottsdale Healthcare*

First Responders to Domestic Violence (DV):

- **Neck:** Any visible sign of trauma (Neck, Eyes, Ears, Mouth)
- **Unconscious:** Memory lapse, incontinence, erratic behavior?
- **Restricted Airway:** Difficult to swallow, breathe or talk?
- **Strangulation:** Report of attempted or successful strangulation?
- **Exam:** Any "Yes" response = Conduct medical forensic DV Exam

